



Winter 2007

Montana Department of Corrections

Correctional Signpost



Officer closes 31-year career

By Mary Pickett
The Billings Gazette

When Sally McRae went to work for the Montana Department of Institutions in 1975, she was told to forget about working as a parole and probation officer because women just weren't cut out for the job.

That didn't deter her.

Within a year, women began to be hired for the job. McRae became the third female probation officer in the state.

The first two women left the job after a few months, but McRae stayed.

On Thursday, she retired after more than 30 years as the Department of Corrections' senior probation officer, male or female.

McRae worked four years in Missoula, almost 19 in Hamilton and nine years in Billings at the Region IV office, the largest in the state.

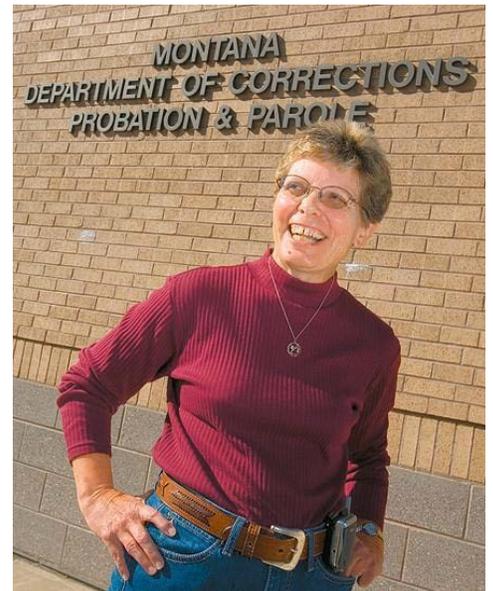
McRae grew up and graduated from high school in

Noxon in northwestern Montana. When she began college at California State University at Long Beach she studied business, switching to criminal justice after taking a civil-law class. "I was hooked," she said.

She was interested in criminal justice because she learned about the law and courtroom procedures and worked with victims, offenders, families and law enforcement officers.

Many things have changed since she started her career.

There not only are more women probation officers, but there also are more officers over all. When



Sally McRae outside her Billings office (Billings Gazette photo)

MCRAE, Page 2

DOC budget strives to keep up with growth

Gov. Brian Schweitzer, in introducing his budget proposal for the Department of Corrections, said it's time to "invest in smarter corrections."

His comment refers to the budget's emphasis on expanding community corrections as a means of helping offenders avoid committing new crimes and prison time, with an overriding goal of

managing 80 percent of offenders outside of prison.

The department's two-year budget request is \$349.8 million in total funds, or about \$97 million (38 percent) more than appropriated by the previous Legislature. Community corrections programs would get \$106.6 million – or about one out of every three dollars – and that repre-

sents a nearly 66 percent increase from two years ago.

The budget proposes \$160.1 million, about 45 percent of the total, for adult secure-custody portion of the the corrections system. Administrative and support services would get just 9½ cents of every dollar in the budget.

"This budget demonstrates the

BUDGET, Page 10

McRae

FROM Page 1

McRae was hired, she was one of 31 state officers working on probation and parole. Now there are 166.

Of that total, 66 are women, said Bob Anez, Corrections Department communications director. About half of the 30 officers in the Billings office are women.

At first, women weren't accepted by male probation and law enforcement officers. "They saw us as social workers," McRae said.

She changed their minds by "just doing my job" and being open to different ways of doing things.

People also assumed that, because she is a woman, she worked only with juvenile offenders. She always has worked with adults.

A probation officer's job is to enforce conditions set by courts or a parole board for a person convicted of a crime.

From the time McRae started, she followed the principle of being fair and consistent, a philosophy that has served her, and the people she has worked with, well. She will work with offenders who have drug or alcohol problems if they are upfront about it and don't ignore it until they wind up in trouble again.

She also is a sex-offender specialist who started a relapse-prevention program for sexual offenders still under supervision of the Corrections Department. Sex offenders attend regular meetings with probation officers to talk about problems to help deter them from committing new crimes.

McRae also has worked on some mental-health cases and high-profile cases, including homicides

that she said she would rather not discuss by name.

Asked if she ever was afraid on the job, she said that anyone in her position would be foolish not to be wary at times, but parole officers usually are more cautious of certain situations than scared.

When an envelope with strange dark powder was sent to the regional office last month, there was no panic as it was being checked out, McRae said. She was more concerned that the substance, which turned out to be harmless, wouldn't be identified quickly and that the staff would have to go through a cumbersome

"It's a balancing act between helping and enforcing rules."

decontamination process.

She tends to look at some potentially dangerous situations, including threats to her life, with a certain dark humor.

The "classiest" threat that she ever received was relayed to her by a jailer who said that a prisoner planned to order red roses for her grave.

She has gotten to know some offenders and their families well because probation officers do unscheduled home checks to see if residents have alcohol, drugs or guns that have been prohibited as part of their sentencing or parole.

She has been trained in self-defense and has carried a gun or pepper spray when needed.

Over the years, her job has moved more toward law enforcement. She made more arrests toward the end of her career.

But she also she talked with offenders' bosses and counselors, which is related to social work. "It's a balancing act, between helping and enforcing rules," she said.

Most of her co-workers have college degrees and may be retired police officers or former employees of programs such as Alternatives Inc. or the Montana Women's Prison.

When McRae started out, the criminal justice system had two ways of dealing with convicted criminals: probation or prison. Now many options are available, including prerelease and treatment programs.

Knowledge of how to deal with sex offenders also has expanded. One of the first sex-related cases she worked on involved a 9-year-old victim. The offender had had sex with underage children for years.

"No one knew what to do," McRae said. Now authorities have more expertise about such crimes and how to deal with victims and perpetrators.

Much more is known about drugs and alcohol, too.

Thirty years ago, officers didn't have a field test even for marijuana. Now there are breath tests for alcohol and tests for methamphetamine, marijuana, cocaine, opiates and barbiturates.

McRae, who said that she's "over 60," doesn't have definite plans for retirement.

Her job has been so physically and emotionally demanding that she wants to kick back for a while, she said.

She and her husband have a ranch, two children and a granddaughter.

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Pine Hills, Riverside

Youth celebrate Indian culture

In an effort to bring their culture closer to young American Indian offenders, the Youth Services Division of the Montana Department of Corrections recently hosted two Native American Wellness Days at Riverside Youth Correctional Facility in Boulder and Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility in Miles City.

Division Administrator Steve Gibson said these are the first of what will be quarterly events at each of the secure facilities, and for paroled youth at transition centers in Great Falls.

Tribal elders, council members, dancers, drummers, mentors and flute player shared their culture, wisdom, traditions, teachings and experiences with the youth at the two facilities.

Cindy McKenzie, superintendent at Riverside, said the opportunity to introduce Indian offenders to aspects of their culture – many for the first time – can play an important role in their rehabilitation by exposing them to good role models.

“Some girls have not had much contact with their cultural roots,” she said. “Others have more, but this event helps all realize they are cared about, thought about and not forgotten by their people. It helps them tap back into some traditions that they learned from an early age that can provide a sense of belonging, connection and motivation. It gives them access to aspects of their culture that they can be proud of.”

Giving the girls a chance to establish contacts with tribal members while incarcerated also improves the chances of them finding support when they return home after being released, McKenzie added.



A Crow tribal member dances during Native American Wellness Day at Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility in Miles City.

Jim Hunter, superintendent at Pine Hills, said the event was a great experience for all Indian youth. Not only did the youth get in touch with their heritage, culture and spirituality, they also realized the support for their well being is present at the facility and most importantly in their home communities.

All 20 girls at Riverside and 23 boys at Pine Hills participated in the activities. About half of the girls at Riverside and 29

percent of the boys at Pine Hills are Indians. Youth had the chance to participate in Indian religious ceremonies and other traditions, such as healing circles, smudging, sweats, round dances, eating fry bread, and listening to native languages and songs.

Gibson said the division will continue to offer culturally appropriate programs to all the youth it serves.

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Drill instructors smile off the job

By Karen Vaughn
Administrative Assistant

Being a drill instructor at the Treasure State Correctional Training Center is no laughing matter. It's a challenging job. Drill instructors work under highly stressful conditions at the military-style correctional program. They are involved in face-to-face contact, confrontation and interaction with trainees all day long. They must maintain a stern, loud and imposing command voice and presence, and participate in rigorous physical training.

So what do two of them do with their free time – relax with the remote in front of the TV, go fishing or lounge in a hammock?

Not for Jim Cameron and Joe Fink. They do what they can't do at work; they laugh it up.

Cameron, a drill instructor and anger management facilitator, is an actor and comedian in his spare time. During the past summer, he was involved in plays produced by Cutler Brothers Productions of Deer Lodge. In prior years, he worked on lighting and set design, but stepped onto the stage only recently.

One of his roles was as Russ, a psychiatrist caught up in his brothers lies in "Big, Fat Fibber." In August, he performed several roles on comedy night, which follows a *Saturday Night Live* format of skit humor. In this routine, Jim recited a fast-paced succession of amusing stories, short jokes and one-liners.

Cameron played Dr. Jackson, a monotone doctor; Bill, a gay

massage therapist with no hands; an uncaring villain in a Batman and Robin skit; and a loudmouth Texan checking on his Rock Creek property.

Cameron was emcee at the annual Cutler Brothers Productions summer theater awards banquet. He had the audience rolling in the aisles, roasting his own daughter Marianne, and other cast members. He said the acting is a stress-relieving hobby and keeps him involved in the community. He also enjoys making people laugh, about as different a goal from his regular job as can be found.

Joe Fink, a senior drill instructor, moonlights as a mute hobo clown in his spare time.

His wife, Barb, has been through a difficult time in battling three consecutive cases of cancer. She quit laughing. She started searching the Internet and became interested in becoming a clown.



Jim Cameron on stage in a Deer Lodge comedy production



LEFT: Joe Fink as drill instructor.

BELOW: Joe and Barb Fink as their alter-egos on the face of their business card



22 complete probation/parole training at academy



Twenty-two students, some working for the Department of Corrections, district courts, and prerelease centers, completed the basic course for adult probation and parole officers at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy in the fall.

The 160-hour course began Oct. 10 and finished Nov. 2, when graduation ceremonies were conducted at the academy.

Fourteen of the officers are working for the department and four are employed by Missoula Correctional Services, which operates the prerelease center there. One each work for Mineral County probation and

Probation/parole graduates pose for class photo. (Courtesy of Helena Photography)

GRADS, Page 7

Smile

FROM Page 4

She met "Frosty," the only Ringling Brothers "master" clown still alive, although retired. Frosty had been the head clown for the circus company for many years. He told her Ringling Brothers no longer had a clown school, but one operated in Las Vegas where all of the basics of clowning are taught by graduates of the Ringling Brothers school and Las Vegas magicians.

Barb Fink became determined to attend the clown school and Joe tagged along for a trip to Vegas. He started sitting outside the classes. Soon his curiosity nudged him inside the classroom.

On their way home to Montana, Joe told Barb, "I could do that." Barb agreed, but told him she would only allow it if he did not talk.

Together they selected his character, "Willie," a mute hobo clown.

Joe or Barb have continued to attend the clown school every year since then.

Joe explained there are classes of clowns. Traditionally, "whiteface" clowns use clown white makeup to cover their entire face and neck with none of the underlying flesh color showing. These clowns usually are costumed far more extravagantly than the other clown types.

Barb is an "auguste" clown named Rosie, a serious, all-knowing, bossy and cocky character. She is the ultimate authority figure. She serves the role of straight man, and sets up situations that can be turned funny.

A "character" clown, Joe's type, adopts an eccentric character of some type, such as a butcher, a baker, a policeman, a housewife or hobo. Prime examples of this type of clown are the familiar circus tramp, and characters portrayed by comedians such as classic Red Skelton, Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin all fit the definition of a

character clown. The character clown always is ridiculed, but can do more crazy stunts and get away with them.

There's a saying in the business: "Clowns can do anything." That's mostly because clowns have such wildly varying performances. Joe's mute hobo can do extensive magic, juggling and balancing acts.

The Finks spend their weekends clowning at birthday parties and special events. Joe believes that, to be a clown, a person needs a keen sense of the absurd and a willingness to perform. He said the best part of clowning is when they go to the children's and chronic-care wards of hospitals and nursing homes, especially an Alzheimer's unit.

By bringing happiness to others, Barb has her laughter back. She knows, first hand, what Groucho Marx once said is true: "A clown is like aspirin. Only he works twice as fast."

Probation, parole training online

Montana's parole and probation officers, who deal with a diverse group of offenders that is increasingly mentally ill, chemically dependent and sexually violent, have a new classroom.

In order to meet the demands of the population of offenders it serves, the Adult Community Corrections Division in the state Department of Corrections hired The University of Montana to design an online training program to assist its officers in dealing with these difficult cases.

The Web site at http://umonline.umt.edu/mt_doc launched Nov. 13.

"This training is absolutely needed," said Tim Conley, the assistant professor in UM's School of Social Work who spearheads the project. "We recently reported to corrections that 48 percent of offenders in the prerelease centers have a mental illness diagnosis and 93 percent have a substance-abuse diagnosis. And parole or probation is their next step from there."

Conley said the new curriculum will cost the state between \$102,000 and \$118,000, depending on how many employees actually log on to take the Web-based courses. He and his colleagues will design four training modules -- each 16 hours long -- that address mental illness, chemical dependency, diversity and sexually violent offenders.

Conley, who has developed professional training courses for 20 years, expects to offer the first module this winter, and the rest will be completed before June 30, 2007.

But first, he and Eva Farrington, his research assistant and a social work undergraduate, will survey the state's parole, probation and prerelease center employees to determine their existing level of knowledge. The training then will be tailored to fit the needs of the probation and parole officers, taking into account what they already know.

"That's sort of an empowerment model of social work applied to training development, because they are empowered to tell us what they need to know," Conley said. "They know what they need a lot better than we do."

The Web-based training will be offered through UM's Continuing Education Department, which



has a wide variety of online course offerings. Conley said the project should save taxpayer dollars because officers won't have to travel to other cities and stay in hotels for training as they do now. Also, this means department's training dollars will be spent in Montana, rather than on out-of-state training courses.

The program will serve parole and probation officers working throughout Montana.

"This is a real collaboration of Montana resources between the department and The University of Montana to develop a program that benefits our officers, offenders and the general public," said Pam Bunke, administrator of the Adult Community Corrections Division. "This will improve our officers' abilities to work with this difficult population of offenders."

Conley said working with parole and probation officers is something of a new twist for him.

"I'm an addiction specialist," he said, "and when I came to Montana, I said, 'All right, where are all the addicts?' And 93 percent of the prerelease population is addicted. I found my addicts, and now I want to keep the workforce that works with them well-trained."

DOC Director Mike Ferriter outlines the department's legislative proposals to a meeting of the Deer Lodge Rotary Club in early November. He talked about expansion of the prison work dorm and additions to community corrections.



Grads

FROM Page 5

parole; Mountain Peaks Inc., a drug treatment center in Billings; Madison County Court Services and Gallatin County Court Services.

The graduates employed by the department are:

- Dan Allen, Tom Anderson, Lisa Hjelmstad, Mark Kotrc and Evelena Werhonig – Billings
- Andrea Bethel and Katie Burton – Missoula
- Sonya Mahlum and Lee Smith – Great Falls
- Jamie Statton – Helena
- Shawn Suda – Libby
- Mark Shellhorn – Kalispell
- Wendi Calvi – Shelby
- Jared Poole – Bozeman

Others in the graduating class were Amy Abendroth, Mark Selin, James Silva and Elizabeth Terry, Missoula Correctional Services; Jennifer Armour, Mineral County misdemeanor probation and parole; Darren Bayliss, Mountain Peaks; Kacey Smart, Madison County court services; and Constantine Vorobetz, Gallatin County court services.

Officer aided heart attack victim at START center

Monty Letexier, institutional probation and parole officer at the Sanction Treatment Assessment Revocation and Transition center in Warm Springs, waged a gallant but unsuccessful effort to save the life of a START employee last month.

When shift leader Jim Elmore suffered a major heart attack on the morning of Nov. 13, Letexier immediately began performing CPR on Elmore and continued to do so during the ambulance ride to the Anaconda hospital.

Although Elmore, 58, did not survive, hospital staff members indicated they were impressed with Letexier's calm and professional efforts to save Elmore's life.



Message from the Director

Mike Ferriter

The Department of Corrections Code of Ethics is a list of 10 promises we all make to ourselves and those we serve when we come to work for this agency. Each represents a commitment to a standard of behavior that says as much about who department employees are personally as it does about how they conduct their professional lives.

On that list is the promise to “report job-related illegal or unethical behavior to the appropriate authority.”

Working in corrections is difficult and challenging. The challenges include supervising and providing services to offenders, supporting victims, compassionately listening to offender families and fulfilling our obligations to the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Obviously, those challenges provide us with plenty to do during the course of our workdays. Therefore, it is critical that we do our best to avoid self-inflicted problems and hurdles that distract us from our work and strain our values.

All of us benefit when corrections employees act appropriately and are held accountable. That casts us and this agency in a positive light and gives us deserved pride in the job we do and the place we work. We are perceived as honest, capable and dedicated.

Conversely, we all suffer when employees behave poorly by violating laws, policies or our ethics code. We get painted with a broad brush of impropriety. It may not be fair, but we are – to some measure – keepers of each other's reputation.

In our positions, we owe it to Montanans; the offenders, victims and families who depend on us; and we owe it to ourselves to stand the ethical high ground each day.

Thanks to all department employees who, by their everyday actions, support our motto of “public safety and TRUST.”

Governor honors six DOC employees



Lt. Albert Hust



Cathy Redfern, left, and Cindy Hiner

Six Department of Corrections employees received the Governor's Award for Excellence in Performance for their individual and team contributions to the department in serving the public and co-workers.

Gov. Brian Schweitzer presented the award in October to Cathy Redfern, Cindy Hiner, Kimberly Timm, Lisa Grady, Julie Buchman and Albert Hust.

Redfern, Health Services Bureau chief at Montana State

Prison, and Hiner, director of nursing, were instrumental in the prison complying with all remaining requirements of the settlement agreement in a lawsuit filed over medical care at the prison more than a decade ago.

Timm, Accounting Bureau chief, and Grady, collections unit manager, were cited for leading the department's successful assumption of the collection and distribution of victim restitution

fees and offender supervision fees.

Buchman, administrative officer in the Youth Services Division, was honored for her trademark prompt and courteous service to co-workers and the public.

Hust, a lieutenant at Montana Women's Prison in charge of visitation and emergency response, was singled out for his dedicated work in training new staff and as role model to fellow employees.



Julie Buchman



Lisa Grady, left, and Kimberly Timm

Rehabilitation: Don't sell it short

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article by Director Mike Ferriter was printed in several Montana newspapers in mid-October, in response to an editorial in The Missoulian that argued against putting too much faith in rehabilitation of offenders.

Those of us who work in corrections sometimes hear comments questioning the value of effectiveness of efforts to rehabilitate offenders, and suggesting that locking up criminals is the only way to prevent crime and preserve public safety.

The idea that less-than-perfect efforts at rehabilitation should be discarded in favor of more incarceration is a concern to the Department of Corrections, which has made a commitment to adding and expanding services that provide the kind of counseling, treatment and training that offenders need to be productive, law-abiding citizens.

First, I assure Montanans we recognize the need for some people to be locked up. That will always be a fact of life in corrections, as a matter of public safety.

Second, correctional system treatment efforts are about public safety and preventing offenders from committing new crimes.

Risk reduction is a hallmark of all the department does in regard to treatment of offenders. It's called the risk principle and embraces the notion that the level of supervision and treatment for offenders be commensurate with the offenders' level of risk.

Third, treatment programs used in corrections are not drawn out of a hat. These are proven methods of transforming criminals' behavior by teaching them new social skills and targeting risk factors such as anti-social attitudes, substance abuse and mental illness.

Fourth, studies that some critics rely on to debunk rehabilitation are 30 years old, badly outdated and factually irrelevant.

Fifth, there's a common misconception that most criminals emerge from prison to resume lives of crime. Montana's recidivism rate is 39 percent, far below the national rate of 67 percent. And the majority of those

repeat offenders are driven by substance abuse problems that might be addressed with additional treatment.

If Montana locked up most offenders rather than in alternative programs, the price tag would be daunting.

If the department put in prison most, or 51 percent, of the expected increase in offenders this year, the added cost for a year would be more than \$12 million. And that doesn't count the more than \$13.4 million price tag to build cells for these additional offenders.

Put most of those offenders on probation, at \$3.75 a day, with access to employment, family support and treatment, and you have saved money that can be used for schools, social services and health care.

To those who think the ability of corrections to correct offenders is a myth, ample evidence exists to the contrary.

A 2001 Florida study found that inmates completing GED, vocational and substance-abuse programs were more successful after their release than those who did not complete programs. A Massachusetts study in 2002 concluded inmates who completed various rehabilitation programs were 44 percent less likely to return to crime than those who failed to complete

the programs.

Closer to home, 20 percent of those completing the sex offender treatment program at Montana State Prison return to prison for some reason – mostly for substance abuse-related reasons – but the rate for those not undergoing treatment is 49 percent.

Montana's WATCH program for treating felony DUI offenders has a 69 percent success rate. Increasingly popular "drug courts" – another rehabilitation program – have their own proven track record. A U.S. General Accountability Office study published in February 2005 found a 10-30 percent reduction in recidivism rates for those who complete a drug-court program.

To be sure, not all rehabilitation programs work as well as others and rehabilitation doesn't work for

"Providing people opportunity to improve their lives and a little hope for the future makes sense for a safer Montana."

Budget

FROM Page 1

level of commitment by the department and the Schweitzer administration to do corrections differently," said Director Mike Ferriter. "We believe that managing offenders in the community, with adequate treatment and counseling, employment, and educational opportunities, offers the best chance for them to develop productive and law-abiding lives."

The corrections budget includes money to pay for operating programs started or expanded in the past two years:

- \$10.6 million for the new methamphetamine treatment centers expected to open in April 2007
- \$9 million for 800 prerelease center beds
- \$4.7 million for the Connections Corrections (chemical-dependency treatment), WATCH (felony DUI treatment) and BASC (Billings Assessment and Sanction Center) programs

- \$3.2 million to hire 36 additional probation and parole officers
- \$2.7 million for 50 additional substance abuse treatment beds
- \$2.5 million to continue operating the START (Sanction, Treatment, Assessment, Revocation and Transition) program
- \$2 million to increase payments 2 percent annually to those providing community corrections services (START, WATCH, prerelease centers)
- \$1.9 million to create a new prerelease center in Northwest Montana
- \$1.7 million to replace lost federal funding for juvenile re-entry programs
- \$1.1 million to contract with private substance abuse counselors working out of probation and parole offices

The budget represents an attempt to keep up with the expected growth in the offender population, which is expected to increase by 7 percent a year, or about 1,700 over the next 2½ years.

"We cannot do much about the offenders who violate conditions of

their community placement and are placed in prison by the courts," Ferriter said. "But we must try to reduce the overall number of offenders," Ferriter said. "The key is offering offenders more assistance when they most need it, as they're struggling to adjust to living their lives in the community."

In addition to the costs of ongoing corrections programs, the budget proposes \$5.5 million in one-time spending. The list includes \$2.6 million for interoperable communications, \$878,000 for supplies and equipment at Montana State Prison, \$377,000 for upgrading the prison's fiber optics network, \$161,000 for the prison's employee transportation program, \$140,000 to replace the 40-year-old gym floor at Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility, and \$35,000 for a commercial kitchen at Riverside Youth Correctional Facility.

The budget contains three Montana State Prison building projects, including \$2.5 million for expansion of the work dorm.

Department adds treatment programs manager

By Kelly Speer
Corrections Manager

Rick Deady has joined the department's Adult Community Corrections Division as the new Treatment Contract Program manager. The position was created to help deal with the rapid growth of community-based programs and as a complement to the position of Prerelease Contract Program manager, held by Kerry Pribnow.

Deady, 48, will oversee the contracts for the WATCH (felony DUI treatment) program, the Connec-

tions Corrections (drug addiction treatment) program, the men's methamphetamine treatment program in Lewistown, the women's methamphetamine treatment program in Boulder, and the Passages program in Billings that will house the women's prerelease center, Billings Assessment and Sanction



Deady

Center and a drug treatment program.

Pribnow will continue to oversee the six prerelease centers and the START program in Warm Springs. Deady and Pribnow will be cross-trained in each other's position to provide increased services to the programs in the community.

"This is an exciting challenge and I am looking forward to getting to know each program and working with them to develop

At probation-parole conference

Montana system compares well

**By Bob Anez
Communications Director**

Montana's corrections system policies and initiatives compare well with those in many other states, said Pam Bunke, administrator of the Adult Community Corrections Division, after returning from a multi-state conference.

"Our programs are right in line or ahead of these particular states," she said following the November meeting sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections and attended by representatives from 17 states and the District of Columbia. "We are being progressive and meeting the needs of our offender population."

The gathering brought together state probation and parole executives for three days in Newport, R.I. Those attending represented states that have both probation and parole supervision. The federal government paid expenses for the state officials.

Bunke said the meeting was an opportunity for officials to discuss common issues, problems and solutions. She said she learned how Montana stacks up against other states.

For example, Rhode Island has no prerelease centers, halfway houses or step-down programs. But Montana has some 800 prerelease center beds. Montana uses therapeutic community models in many of its facilities and those with which the state contracts, but Arkansas is just beginning to use such a program.



Bunke

Montana provides firearms and vehicles for its probation and parole officers, Bunke noted. But Vermont doesn't supply vehicles, and Wyoming and Tennessee do not allow their officers to carry firearms or arrest violators, she said.

No other state has a program like WATCH, which treats felony DUI offenders, Bunke said.

While some states are considering use of "banked caseloads," the lowest level of supervision for offenders, Montana has employed that system for a couple of years, she added.

Dealing with sex offenders was a major topic at the conference, Bunke said. States are increasing their use of polygraphs instead of global positioning satellite (GPS) monitoring, because the lie detectors provide more information on an offender's actions than does the electronic tracking, she said.

Tennessee officials found that GPS left officers unable to handle the barrage of alarms that occurred at the rate of about 2,000 per day, Bunke said. "They couldn't adequately monitor it all."

She said all the states are waiting to see the true impact on corrections programs from tougher sex offender laws that are being enacted across the country.

Montana not only fares well in comparison to other states, but also corrections officials elsewhere are very aware of some innovative programs in Montana. Yet other states have unique programs of their own, Bunke said. "We were not the shining star by any means."

Other states at the meeting were Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Manager

FROM Page 10

new and innovative ideas to achieve their goals," Deady said.

Pam Bunke, division administrator, is excited about the addition of Deady because his "history with

contracts will allow us to utilize his skills and knowledge in community corrections."

Deady (pronounced DAY-dee) has over 16 years experience as a contract monitor with the Montana Job Training Partnership, a private nonprofit organization that focused on workforce development for

community-based organizations, job services and educational organizations.

A native of Havre, Deady and his family moved to Helena in 1988 when he accepted a position with the Department of Labor and Industry. Deady and wife Connie have two children.

**By Cynthia Davenport
Human Resource Manager, MSP**

Twenty-five years ago, I used to live and work in the inner city of Minneapolis. The church I went to in my neighborhood had many social programs, one of which was a shelter for street people. I used to volunteer once or twice a month to work at this shelter.

During the 1980s in Minneapolis, the average street person was a 30-year-old white male. But this was not evident at our shelter. While I could determine that most of our residents were men, they looked old, tired, shriveled and too dirty to determine much else.

While sitting at the desk in the shelter one cold February night as the residents slept restlessly on their cots, the phone rang. It was a woman. She did not and would not identify herself but she stated she was from southern Minnesota and was in Minneapolis on a weekend shopping trip. She told me she had two children, a boy and a girl, and an abusive husband. She had realized on her trip alone to Minneapolis that she needed to get out of the relationship for fear of her own life and the safety and future of her children.

She began asking questions about our shelter. As I looked around the room at the matted hair and dirty faces, heard the snores and grunts, and smelled the musty odor of unbathed bodies, I knew if she came here she'd be thinking her abusive husband didn't look so bad. So I kept her talking, encouraging her for the steps she had already taken as I searched through the reference manual provided us for a more appropriate shelter or contact for her.

She told me she needed to go home to take care of some things and get her children and that she would be coming back to Minneapolis in a few weeks. I was nervous about her going back and we talked about what she would do and how she would make it. I gave her some phone numbers of places to contact and just kept listening and encouraging her for the steps she had taken and continued letting her

know her options. Before she hung up I also gave her my name and my home phone number. At the most, the conversation probably lasted 15 minutes.

I worried for a long time after that phone call. I rehashed everything I had said and done, concerned that I had not done enough or the right thing to save her and her children from an abusive relationship. I often thought about her and wondered how she was; I hoped that she was safe. I wished over and over that I somehow had gotten her to tell me her name so I could have followed up, checked on her to ensure she was OK.

A year later, I was fixing dinner in my apartment and the phone rang. It was her. She told me she had carried my home number with her the whole year and thought, since she had her feet on the ground, she should let me know how she was. She told me how she had gone home after speaking to me on the

phone, gotten some records, taken care of some banking and snuck out of town when her husband was gone. She had driven to Minneapolis where she contacted one of the shelters for abused women I had recommended, and she went there. She said it had been a very hard year and that often she had wanted to give up and go back to her husband, but now she had a job and was living on her own. She and her children were in counseling and doing much better. She said she wanted to thank me.

I have to tell you that was one of the best days of my life. To this day, as I retell the story, my heart wells up with joy and relief. The little time I had spent listening to and supporting someone, whose name I did not even know, had meant enough to her for her to carry my phone number with her for a year.

I learned a great lesson through that experience. I learned that I could make a difference in the world, even through a simple 15-minute phone call. I learned that my behavior, actions and words can affect and cause change in the world. I learned that

Thoughts on our mission

Department's biennial report available

The Department of Corrections' biennial report, published in advance of each legislative session, is available electronically at the department web site:

<http://www.cor.mt.gov>.

The 120-page report, printed by the MCE print shop, features a cover showing three offenders in community corrections programs working in a lumber production plant,



Hall

a reflection of department's efforts to expand use of community corrections as one means of dealing with the growing offender population.

The book includes descriptions of divisions, facilities and programs; a detailed list of department contacts and phone numbers, organizational chart, population forecasts, and an extensive statistical section.

"This report will be a valuable tool for the department during the the coming legislative session and also for Montanans looking for a clear understanding of how



Johnson

corrections operates," said Corrections Director Mike Ferriter.

Two key contributors to the report were Dewey Hall and Mark Johnson in

the Information Technology Bureau. They scoured department data to develop dozens of charts and graphs that illustrate department operations and trends among the state's offender population.

Thoughts

FROM Page 12

there is certainly no greater joy in the world than knowing you helped someone.

This experience also reminded me of the negative impact I could have on the world when I am not cautious with my words, my actions and my behavior. As easily as 15 minutes of my time meant something positive for this woman, I could as easily – and surely have – brought hurt and pain into the world through moments of thoughtless words and actions.

In this work we call corrections, we have the opportunity to positively affect the lives of many people. Our mission, in fact, exhorts us to this call of encouraging change when it states: "The Montana Department of Corrections enhances public safety, promotes positive change in offender behavior, reintegrates offenders into the community and supports victims of crime."

So often, though, we get caught up in the protocols, policies, checklists, emails, phone messages, reports and meetings. We barely get past the public safety

piece of the mission statement. We forget that most of the offenders incarcerated will be getting out and living in our communities. We forget the effect our words, actions and behaviors have on the people around us and, in our thoughtlessness, probably have more of a negative impact than a positive one.

One August day, when my daughter was 4 or 5 years old, the sky was dark and heavy with smoke from local forest fires. Amidst the grayness in the sky was a small glint of light, a glimpse of what the day should have been. My daughter grabbed my hand and pointed at this glimmer of light and stated, "Look Mom, there is a crack in the sky and heaven is pouring out."

For most people the word "prison" brings up a picture of a sky laden with heavy smoke and darkness like my daughter and I witnessed that late summer day. As employees within a correctional system, we must paint a different picture and we can begin to do it by being cautious with our actions, words and behaviors, and being examples of positive behavior. I believe by doing this we can promote change, we can make a difference, we can be the glint of light, the glimmer of hope, the crack in the sky.



Davenport

Parish nurses serve body, soul

The young offender sat nervously, head down and surrounded by the community support team members who soon would enter his life. The six virtual strangers explained in turn what each offered and expected in return from the youth.

In a matter of days the teenager would be leaving Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility. Upon release, the youth would be supported by these team members committed to helping him move forward into productive adulthood as a member of a Montana community.

Such local “re-entry” teams work with juvenile parole officers to help youth successfully return to the community from either Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility or Riverside Youth Correctional Facility. Teams – part of the Youth Re-entry Program – typically include corrections professionals, mentors, treatment providers, educators, employment specialists, placement representatives, law enforcement officials and often a nurse.

A parish nurse, a licensed professional nurse who has completed additional training to fill this role, is an important part of a youth’s transition by offering medical expertise and facilitating medical appointments in situations that are daunting to persons not familiar with the medical profession. If a youth requests, the nurse also can serve as a vital link to a local faith community.

The foundation for the boy’s encounter with his support team was laid before that day. During his stay at Pine Hills, the boy had participated in voluntary religious programming and began to ask serious

questions about the meaning and purpose of life.

But the implications of lifestyle choices are not always well understood by juveniles and delayed intervention contributes to increased cost and incidence of disease or ill health. Accomplishments made through programming while in custody can quickly be undone if not adequately supported in the post-institutional setting.

Fortunately, the boy had a parish nurse among his mentors. The nurse listened patiently as discussion progressed around the conference table. Then from her unique perspective as a faith-based health-care professional, registered nurse Lizz Campo asked the teen a single question that brought his head upright and caused everyone to turn toward the nurse in quiet amazement. The question revealed the boy did not know something as basic as how to manage acne.

Campo offered advice that related to a medical condition and his self image. She also made herself available to further discuss this kind of issue, and to facilitate spiritual connections, if the youth desired.

A parish nurse can offer critical support for a youth leaving a correctional facility where all his needs – including health care – were met by corrections professionals. When released from custody, areas of life gradually are turned over to youths to manage for them-

selves. Juveniles must learn to be responsible for making decisions about their faith and health-care choices.

Navigating the health-care system is a daunting challenge for seasoned adults. So a lack of knowledge and experience with health care can result in a newly minted adult mistakenly using

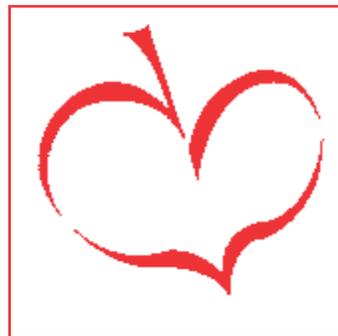
emergency room services for care that could be deferred or delaying care that is needed more urgently.

Campo has a great perspective on the youth and the role she plays, saying, “It’s a wonderful service for the children.

I call them my wounded children and lost children. I love being with them and helping them however I can.”

Parish nurses like Campo are making a difference in the lives of Montana’s young offenders. They guide youth toward local health care resources, faith communities and education. Establishing a primary health care provider relationship and connection to credible members of the youth’s own faith are achieved through skills and abilities unique to parish nurse ministry.

Three parish nurses are under contract with the department and numerous others volunteer throughout the state. Individuals interested in participating in the program may contact the Rev. Steve Rice, religious director at Pine Hills and member of the health ministry team at First Lutheran Church in Miles City, at pastor@flcf.net or 951-6463.





The former Howard Johnson Express Inn in Billings is home to a new 165-bed women's community corrections facility.

Passages opens in January

**By Dave Armstrong
Alternatives Inc.**

Passages, the newest addition to Montana's correctional system, is expected to open its doors in Billings by mid-January.

Operated by Alternatives, Inc. in the former Howard Johnson Express Inn, the program will be a 155-bed community corrections facility for women offenders under contract with the Department of Corrections.

The project includes a 65-bed prerelease center, the 50-bed Billings Assessment and Sanction Center and a 40-bed alcohol and drug abuse treatment program similar to the Connections Corrections program operated in Butte.

The opening of Passages will permit Alternatives to move its women's prerelease program from the Alpha House men's prerelease facility in Billings. The result will be expanded versions of both prerelease operations. The Alpha House will house 25 more men after the same number of women move to Passages, where the prerelease center will occupy the first floor of the former motel and will be called Passages PRC (prerelease center).

In late September, Gov. Brian Schweitzer approved privatization of the Billings Assessment and Sanction Center (BASC), which has been housed at the Montana Women's Prison. The 22-bed unit shared space

with the Intensive Challenges Program (women's boot camp) and its relocation to Passages will make additional room available at the prison.

Once at Passages, BASC will occupy the second floor of the building and will include 30 assessment beds and 20 sanction beds. The sanction beds will be similar to the START program for men – providing short-term disciplinary placement for offenders violating conditions of supervision or prerelease placement. This program will be known as Passages ASC (assessment and sanction center).

The Connections 60-day drug and alcohol treatment program at Butte has been in great demand from its beginning and, despite its expansion to 90 beds, has a lengthy waiting list. Passages' treatment program will relieve pressure on that program and allow expansion of its capacity for men by 40 beds. The new program, which will be on the third floor, is called Passages ADT (alcohol and drug treatment).

Staff recruitment and training are under way.

Passages has the advantage of a great setting. Each spacious room has a bathroom, and programming space is abundant. Renovations include the construction of a full-service kitchen, installation of security doors and cameras, improved lighting and a redesigned reception area.

Court ruling supports P&P home visits

By Bob Anez
Communications Director

A judge's requirement that probationers keep their homes open for visits by probation officers does not violate the constitution's right to privacy or the ban on unreasonable searches, the Montana Supreme Court has ruled.

Passages

FROM Page 15

Alternatives will move its business offices to the new facility, which is just a few blocks south of both the Montana Women's Prison and the Billings probation and parole office.

Jan Begger, who currently serves as BASC liaison will be director of Passages. Begger has worked for Alternatives in a variety of capacities for more than 16 years and holds a master's degree in management from the University of Mary.

Rhonda Stennerson, a licensed addictions counselor, worked for the South Central Mental Health Center until joining Alternatives in May 2006. She has extensive experience with the matrix model for treatment of methamphetamine addiction, and will manage day-to-day responsibilities for the alcohol and drug treatment program.

Mindy Brookshire, a licensed clinical professional counselor who has worked in the mental health center at the Montana Women's Prison, will manage the BASC program.

Dave Armstrong remains administrator of Alternatives, a private, nonprofit corporation. Betty Ann Roan, deputy administrator, will manage the men's prerelease center, and the misdemeanor probation and jail alternatives programs.

Tours of the facility can be arranged through Gwen Bryant, executive assistant, at 259-9695 ext. 103 or by email at gbryant@altinc.net. Updates on construction progress are available at the Alternatives Web site: www.altinc.net.

Since formed in 1980, Alternatives has operated residential and non-residential supervision and treatment programs for state and federal inmates in Yellowstone, Carbon and Stillwater counties.

The 4-1 decision in November said probationers, unlike other citizens, have no reasonable expectation of privacy that would prevent home visits from taking place and, therefore, officers can visit a home without first having reasonable cause to do so.

In issuing the ruling, the high court reversed a decision it made in the same case in May. The attorney general's office had asked for a rehearing based on a new U.S. Supreme Court ruling that parolees in California can be subjected to searches as a condition of their parole.

However, the ability to visit probationers' homes is not without restriction, the court cautioned.

"Since a home visit is not a search, a probation officer may not open drawers, cabinets, closets or the like; nor may the officer rummage through the probationer's belonging," Justice Bill Leaphart wrote for the court. "While a home visit has the potential to turn into a search pursuant to an officer's plain-view observations, it must remain within the parameters of a home visit unless or until there is reasonable cause to engage in a search."

The court said that home visits are a "routine and reasonable element of supervising a convicted person serving a term of supervised release," but are not searches.

Chief Justice Karla Gray and Justices John Warner and Brian Morris signed the opinion. Justice James Nelson dissented, saying officers should have reasonable cause even for home visits.

Pam Bunke, administrator of the Adult Community Corrections, said the court decision preserves a valuable tool for probation officers.

"Home visits are a critical part of our ability to properly supervise offenders in the community," she said. "This is an issue of public safety, and visits help establish a rapport with offenders and their families

Four MSP nurses certified

Four nurses at Montana State Prison have been certified in the field of correctional health care.

Eunice Cole, a licensed practical nurse, and registered nurses Aaron Frederick, Anita Johnson and Jodie Schiele obtained their certification at the National Commission on Correctional Health Care Conference in Atlanta during October.

Victims heal after meeting offenders

By Sally Hilander
Victim Information Specialist

EDITOR'S NOTE: The names of the victim and offender have been changed.

Three men beat Robert's nephew senseless one summer night in 2004 and left him alone to die near a river canal. A jogger found his body the next morning.

James confessed to murder. Robert wanted to confront James, show him family pictures, and tell him how it feels to have someone you love murdered. Robert had questions for James. Why did you kill John? What really happened that night? Are you sorry?

Robert is the first family member under the Department of Corrections' new victim-offender dialogue program to meet face-to-face with an inmate convicted of deliberate homicide. The dialogue occurred inside one of Montana's prisons.

Only victims may initiate victim-offender dialogue. Offenders participate voluntarily and either party can cancel. Volunteer facilitators and the department's victim information specialist meet often with the victim and offender, separately, several times in advance. Offenders must take full responsibility for their crimes, make no excuses, and place no blame with others. They receive no tangible rewards such as early parole consideration.

After facilitator Eve Malo of Dillon guided Robert and James through months of preparation, the time finally came for them to meet. Robert opened his Bible to Ecclesiastes: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to reap, a time to kill and a time to heal"

Then Robert brought out the family photos. He told James all about the nephew, friend, father and brother who should never have died. James listened intently.



Department of Corrections volunteer Kathy Wright oversees a face-to-face dialogue between an inmate in prison (in red) and the murder victim's relative.

Then it was time for James to speak. He quietly described how he and others set out to party on a summer day. They had a chance meeting with John, who joined in the drinking. The men joked around and began to argue and push. Then John became the target of a mean-spirited dunking game, three against one, on the banks of a river canal. James told Robert that he remembered dunking James, but he was shocked the next day to learn that John was dead. It wasn't supposed to be that way, he told Robert.

The victim-offender dialogue was agonizing at first, but continued for four hours.

Robert asked James why he would throw away his life at age 18. James had decided to leave his small hometown and hang out for the summer, meet girls and party with a couple of acquaintances in a larger community. He planned to go home in the fall, finish high school, and maybe go to college. Then, just like that, it was all over – John dead and prison ahead.

James did not ask for forgiveness and Robert did not offer it, but the two discussed forgiveness in the context of a creator. Then Robert made an offer: If he is still alive when James is paroled, maybe they can

Infirmary licensed

The infirmary at Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility in Miles City has earned its health care facility/service license for the next year.

The medical section at the juvenile facility for boys remains a model of professionalism and efficiency under the leadership of Edna Jensen, a registered nurse and supervisor of a staff of three other registered nurses: Barb Hunzicker, Cheryl Klang and Sandy Jensen. The four women have 79 years of combined nursing experience.

Jim Hunter, Pine Hills superintendent, attributed the facility's licensing to the work of the nursing staff.

Excellent health care is provided the youth at Pine Hills seven days a week. The infirmary is staffed from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. most days and until 8 p.m. when needed. After-hours coverage is provided through a rotating call-out procedure for quick response in emergency situations.

The medical section also has developed a working relationship with local clinics, hospital, dentists, eye-care professionals and physicians. Coordination of visits with a contract psychiatrist is a major function of the infirmary staff and is invaluable in providing ongoing mental health care for the youth in residence, Hunter said.

Federal grant aids Pine Hills library

A \$134,000 federal grant is already being put to use at Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility.

The services being developed with grant money are grouped together into an educational blueprint called "*Just Read It!*" Its aim is to develop library services in ways that will supplement the school's curriculum, develop the *Accelerated Reader*® reading program and enhance resources for clinical staff working with youth. This program will allow teachers to identify youths' reading level and to stimulate and track their improvement in a more meaningful way than is already done through standardized tests.

To date, the focus of school staff has been technology, acquisition of catalog services, collection development, and improving resources for case managers and counselors. Five new computers capable of managing a reading program, cataloging, educational software and normal word processing have been purchased. By the end of the grant year, they will be used to administer reading diagnostic

tests, complete card catalog searches, and apply educational software.

The Pine Hills School library is listed in the Montana library directory and a detailed collection management policy was filed with the Montana State Library. The process of scanning the school's current library collection into the catalog will begin before the end of December. Once this part of the program is up and running, staff and youths will have access to interlibrary loan and reciprocal borrowing privileges with other libraries across the state.

The process of collection development has been under way since early September. The library's original collection was pared from 4,400 to 2,000 books, with outdated volumes and those in poor condition being discarded before arrival of new materials.

About 2,600 new books have been ordered, with more to be selected in January and early February. These purchases are necessary in order to update the collection and bring it into alignment with school curriculum.

Victims

FROM Page 17

meet for coffee. James said he would like that. James returned to his cell and Robert went home to plant a rose bush for his nephew.

The department's Crime Victims Advisory Council modeled the victim-offender dialogue program after those in Texas, Ohio and Minnesota, leaders in restorative justice. The process has gained popularity over the past 20 years in the United States with positive results. Victims can move forward after being "stuck" for years in a quag-

mire of unresolved questions and often-erroneous beliefs about the details of the crime. Offenders experience a higher level of accountability, become better prison inmates and are less likely to re-offend after they are released.

Several months after Robert and James met, the department conducted a second dialogue in another deliberate homicide case, and an aggravated assault victim will meet with her offender in early 2007. The program will grow as victims learn about the process. For more information, or to view a taped victim-offender dialogue, contact Sally Hilander at 444-7461 or shilander@mt.gov.

Women inmates lending a hand

By Lance Benzel
The Billings Gazette

With all the downtime, why not help?

It's a thought that occurred to Pamela Elliott when she learned she could use her downtime at Montana Women's Prison to benefit abused and neglected children.

For the past four years, she has helped fellow inmates decorate a Christmas tree for an annual auction by the Family Tree Center. This year, their efforts brought \$500 to the event, in which \$40,000 was netted for the center's intervention and education programs.

There were unexpected benefits, too.

"It's an amazing feeling," said Elliott, a mother of three from Miles City who is serving a 30-year sentence for negligent homicide. "I think it's been part of my growing and learning experience and trying not to be the old self-centered and selfish person that got me in here."

She's not alone in her sentiments.

More than 80 percent of the women at Montana Women's Prison have volunteered on community service projects, said prison spokeswoman Annamae Siegfried-Derrick, and a smaller group helps spearhead projects year-round.

The women crochet hats, mittens and blankets for local thrift shops and homeless shelters; prepare holiday gift baskets for children and meals for the needy; and contribute to fundraisers for a long list of nonprofits, including the Yellowstone AIDS Project, Friendship House, Yellowstone Cancer Society, The Montana Rescue Mission, March of Dimes, Head Start and the Billings Food Bank.

Aside from the obvious benefits, the volunteering helps prepare the women for life on the outside, Siegfried-Derrick said. They acquire a focus outside "criminal thinking," learn to think of others while paying their debt to society and reconnect with positive values.

"In some cases, the light goes on, and it makes a world of difference," she said.

Inmate Donita Herrera knows the feeling.

"We all feel that our life before we got here left a lot to be desired in terms of giving to the community," she said. "This gives us the chance to give back."

There's no shortage of willing helpers.

Every month, the Cornerstone Community Church coordinates a charitable event with room for 30 volunteers, and every month more than 100 women sign up to participate.

In one ongoing project, the women have prepared hundreds of Christmas ornaments for a fundraiser at Barjon's Books downtown. The ornaments - available for a suggested donation of \$1 to \$5 - are sold to raise

money for the prison's Parenting Program.

"It gave them the opportunity to give something back to a program that's really important to them," said Faye Slice, an inmate who helps coordinate the volunteer efforts.

Alicia Strauss draws on her skills in crochet and cross-stitch in volunteer efforts, and she likes to focus on projects that raise money or comfort for cancer sufferers.

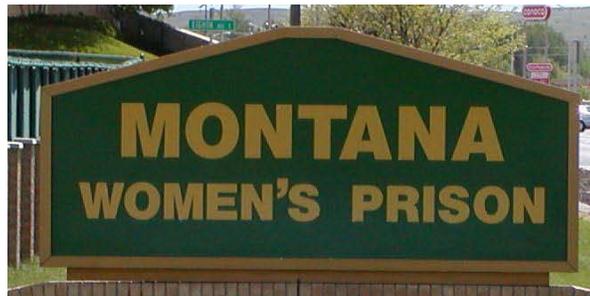
"I like being creative - it's very calming to me and soothing," she said.

Some projects have been developed with financial support from the women themselves, via the prison's inmate welfare fund. The money comes from commissions on commissary sales, phone calls and donations. The money is applied, after a majority vote of inmates, toward quality-of-life purchases.

At Montana Women's Prison, the funds have bought gym equipment for the workout room, a television, books for the library and various other creature comforts.

The funds also are used for community service projects, such as buying material or, in one recent case, Christmas gifts for the juvenile offenders in the Youth Services Center in Billings.

"We could use it on ourselves, but we choose to spend a lot of it on outside sources," inmate Becky Richards said.



Grant benefits inmates' children

By **Sally K. Hilander**
Victim Information Specialist

The Department of Corrections and several partner agencies recently received a technical assistance grant for projects to strengthen the connection between Montana prison inmates and their children.

The Family & Corrections Network (FCN) awarded 10 grants nationally to support goals of a document titled, "The Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents."

This statement of rights is based on the premise that children whose parents have committed crimes are entitled to safety, security, support, information, and both physical and emotional contact with their parents, if appropriate. Nell Bernstein, a California journalist and author, and Gretchen Newby, a practitioner serving children of prisoners, wrote the document in 2003 to raise national awareness about the plight of children with parents behind bars. A child's fear and sense of isolation usually begins when a parent is arrested. Family separation may be permanent when the parent goes to prison.

About 20 Montanans who share the desire to help these children at risk met in Helena in early Decem-

ber with the grantor, Dee Ann Newell of Arkansas, to create a task force and define possible projects. Newell is a 2006 Soros Foundation fellow who chose this as her project. The Soros Foundation supports educational, social, legal, and health care reform.

Newell selected Montana to receive her technical assistance be-

friends, are among those who support the effort.

Cindy Winkley, a member of the central office staff, discovered the grant announcement last summer on the FCN website. Winkley is the mother of five children whose father died in prison in 2003.

Winkley's testimonial about her family's trauma helped the task force narrow its focus to those aspects of the rights document that support the direct relationship between children and their incarcerated parents, rather than on arrest protocols and custodial care.

The task force brainstormed possible projects, but made no decisions. Various smaller groups will research policy and existing practices. Ideas included visitation protocols for inmates to help them relate to their children in a positive, age-appropriate way; transportation assistance for inmate families; and additional parenting and life-skills education for inmates.

For more information about the project, or to make suggestions, contact any of DOC task force representative: Erik Wilkerson, MSP program manager, (406) 846-1320 Ext. 2293; Cindy Winkley, (406) 444-3908; Sally Hilander in the director's office, (406) 444-7461; or Julie Gauthier of Family Tree in Billings, who coordinates the parenting program at the women's prison, (406) 247-5146.

Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents

- 1. To be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest*
- 2. To be heard when decisions are made about me*
- 3. To be considered when decisions are made about my parent*
- 4. To be well cared for in my parent's absence*
- 5. To speak with, see, and touch my parent*
- 6. To support as I face my parent's incarceration*
- 7. To not be judged, blamed or labeled because my parent is incarcerated*
- 8. To have a life-long relationship with my parent*

cause of broad support demonstrated in the application. The Montana Head Start/State Collaboration Office is the lead agency. The Head Start Association, Department of Public Health and Human Services' Child Protective Services office, Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Montana State Prison, Montana Women's Prison, faith-based groups and inmate families and

Broadband pay **DOC reaches pay milestone**

The Department of Corrections will reach a milestone next July in its long-running effort to move all employees to a market-based pay system.

With the first pay period of the next fiscal year, the last 70-80 employees will be added to the "broadband" system, which allows more flexibility in setting wages to ensure that pay is competitive.

"I am gratified and relieved that at long last we can say we have an agency-wide plan, and a sound one," said Ken McElroy, Human Resources Bureau chief. "I know that other agencies have looked to our approach as a model. I look forward to our work in developing that flexible approach to pay beyond market in a manner that is also a model for others because of its ability to reward employees and be a performance driver."

The old system subjected every employee to a rigid, step-based pay system that provided raises largely based on how long a worker had been on the state payroll. But times changed and government began to realize that, in order to effectively compete with the private sector for quality employees, it had to offer salaries more comparable to what businesses pay.

This concept of market-based pay was initiated almost 15 years ago but only as a statewide modification of that old "step" system. Under that system, employees moved incrementally toward average market pay based on years of experience and distance from market.

In those days, however, the market average was determined by collecting pay information on all job titles at a given grade and that distorted the rates for some occupations.

In 1995, the Legislature allowed agencies to experiment with "alternative pay plans." That began the move toward broadband, market-based pay.

In the spring and summer of 2000, in hopes of addressing serious recruitment issues, then-Corrections Director Rick Day commissioned a work group to develop a broadband plan for correctional officers. By that fall, the parties had crafted a plan to present to the director, but the funding was not included in the budget given the 2001 Legislature.

Bill Slaughter, as the new corrections director, told

the Human Resource Bureau to proceed with plans for a broadband plan to cover the entire department. This was to be accomplished by using negotiating the feature into labor contracts.

The essential elements of the plan were that:

- All employees would move from the entry rate for their occupations (about 80 percent of market) to the market rate in equal increments over a five-year period.

- Movement beyond the market rate would reward those acquiring additional competencies, meeting or exceeding goals, and other factors that meet the needs of the agency and results in better performance or improved efficiency.

- Payment beyond market could take the form of lump-sum bonuses or be added to the base.

Correctional officers were the first to reach agreement on a plan through contract negotiations, and that plan has been operating for several years. Only a couple of bargaining units representing a handful of blue-collar employees and teachers have yet to agree on a broadband pay approach.

In the meantime, the Human Resource Bureau helped the rest of the agency to update market pay ranges, job profiles and five-year plans. The plans are road maps for movement from entry pay to market and contain the training requirements and competency expectations.

The bureau assessed the rates of pay of non-union staff and compared it to current market data and each employee's job experience to determine what the cost would be to fully implement our broadband pay system for those employees. Between 70 and 80 non-union staff require some level of pay adjustment to fit their occupational pay range. Others who have less than six years of experience in their current job may be eligible for a pay adjustment on a future anniversary date.

The management team decided to implement the initial pay adjustments at the start of the next biennium because of the fiscal state of the department and the budget supplemental that will be requested from the 2007 Legislature.

Recent contract negotiations between the state and representatives and the major employee unions resulted in several landmark agreements that include a mandate that all state employees move to the broadband pay plan by July 2007.

New Employees

EDITOR'S NOTE: This list includes new hires from Sept. 1, 2006 through Nov. 24, 2006, based on personnel records in the central office. If you notice any errors or omissions, please call the *Signpost* editor at (406) 444-0409, or e-mail him at banez@mt.gov.

Central Office

Stephanie Boudreau
Rick Deady
David Kirkpatrick
Gayla Kukes
Armando Oropeza

Montana State Prison

Heidi Abbott
Matthew Bellon
Gerald Carlyle
Adam Cook

Randy Hagerman
Kimberly Hanna
Larry Hooks
Dorothy Horne
Leslie Johnson
Alma McDermott
Michelle McKinnon
Brenda Meir
Jamie Moquist
Alex Sexton
George Smith Jr.
Leah Stauffer
John Whitaker
Roger Wright

Pine Hills

Gordon Brannon
Christy Brewer
Sean Whitney

Probation and Parole

Randy Block, Kalispell
Barbara Strohl, Butte
Barry Ivanhoff, Billings

Riverside

Daryl Miller

Treasure State

Tanya LaMere

Youth Transition Center

Michael Caliendo



Montana Department of Corrections Mission

The Montana Department of Corrections enhances public safety, promotes positive change in offender behavior, reintegrates offenders into the community and supports victims of crime.

Rehabilitation

FROM Page 9

everybody. But rejecting rehabilitation is a dangerous proposition since 97 percent of inmates eventually get out and we would be foolish to send them back without first exposing them to some rehabilitation efforts. That hardly protects Montana citizens or preserves their safety.

Promoting rehabilitation is not some idealized vision seen through rose-colored glasses. In my 30 years of working in corrections, I have had plenty of time to shake the stars from my eyes. One thing still holds true: Providing people opportunity to improve their lives and a little hope for the future makes sense for a safer Montana.

Department decisions on managing offenders are always a balancing act that weighs the need for public safety against the needs of offenders and concerns for victims. We do not expose Montanans to unacceptable risks in deciding placement of offenders.

Missoula is a good example, with 1,200 offenders under community supervision and, for the most part, living lives as law-abiding citizens who work hard to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

What must be remembered is that treatment programs and other rehabilitation efforts do help offenders, and that the price tag – both in terms of dollars spent and human lives abandoned – is too high to turn our collective back on assisting criminals to turn their lives around.

Signpost Deadlines

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Edition</u>
March 31.....	Spring
June 30.....	Summer
Sept. 30.....	Fall
Dec. 15.....	Winter

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DOC Director: Mike Ferriter
Signpost Editor: Bob Anez, (406) 444-0409, banez@mt.gov